

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 05310 121542Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SAA-01 SES-02 SSM-03

SS-15 SP-02 PM-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9631

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T BEIRUT 5310

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: LE SY IS PEPR PINT PINS MILI

SUBJ: REMARKS OF PHALANGE MILITARY COMMANDER BASHIR GEMAYEL

ON THE CURRENT SITUATION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO BASHIR GEMAYEL: A "GENERAL UPRISING" AGAINST THE SYRIANS AND PRESIDENT SARKIS IS LIKELY WITHIN A MATTER OF WEEKS. THE CHRISTIANS WILL LAUNCH A "GUERRILLA WAR" AGAINST THE SYRIANS IF THE ADF MANDATE IS RENEWED. PRESIDENT SARKIS NOW BELIEVES DECENTRALIZATION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT IMPASSE. BEFORE DECENTRALIZATION, HOWEVER, THERE MUST BE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SYRIANS AND A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE. THE SYRIANS NOW CONTROL ALL OF THE MOUNTAINS NORTH OF BYBLOS DISTRICT. THE GENERAL STRIKE ON SEPTEMBER 13 WILL BE PEACEFUL. END SUMMARY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 05310 121542Z

2. EMBOFF CALLED ON PHALANGE MILITARY LEADER BASHIR GEMAYEL AT LATTER'S APARTMENT IN ASHRAFIYAH ON SEPTEMBER 12. BASHIR SAID THE FOLLOWING:

3. THE CHRISTIANS COULD NOT AFFORD A WAR OF ATTRITION. AS A RESULT, A "GENERAL UPRISING" WAS LIKELY WITHIN A MATTER OF WEEKS. BASHIR ADMITTED THAT THE CHRISTIANS

COULD NOT DEFEAT THE SYRIANS MILITARILY UNLESS THERE WERE "LANDINGS" ON THE BEACHES. HE CLAIMED THAT IT WAS BETTER TO DIE ALL AT ONCE, HOWEVER, THAN TO BE BLED SLOWLY TO DEATH.

4. ASKED WHETHER THE GENERAL UPRISING WOULD BE AGAINST THE SYRIANS, BASHIR REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE AGAINST EVERYONE WHO IS "AGAINST US". (BASHIR CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT THE "GENERAL UPRISING" WOULD BE AGAINST PRESIDENT SARKIS AS WELL AS THE SYRIANS. BASHIR CALLED SARKIS A QUISLING AND A SYRIAN PUPPET). BASHIR ALSO SAID THAT IF THE ADF MANDATE IS RENEWED -- EVEN FOR ONLY THREE MONTHS -- THE CHRISTIANS WOULD LAUNCH A "GUERRILLA WAR" AGAINST THE SYRIANS.

5. BASHIR SAID THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS WAS BEHIND THE DISCUSSIONS OF DECENTRALIZATION AT THE SEPTEMBER 11 CABINET MEETING. SARKIS HAD ASKED MINISTER OF INDUSTRY MICHEL DOUMIT, MINISTER OF INTERIOR SALAH SALMAN AND MINISTER OF HEALTH IBRAHIM CHEAITO TO PUT FORTH VARIOUS PLANS AT THE MEETING, BECAUSE SARKIS NOW THOUGHT THAT DECENTRALIZATION WAS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT IMPASSE.

A. BASHIR RECALLED THAT ON MARCH 5, 1977 HE HAD PROPOSED A SYSTEM OF DECENTRALIZATION FOR LEBANON, BUT THAT SARKIS HAD OPPOSED IT. NOW, HOWEVER, DECENTRALIZATION WAS "TOO LATE".
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 05310 121542Z

BASHIR ADDED THAT BEFORE DECENTRALIZATION THERE HAD TO BE:

- (1) WITHDRAWAL OF THE SYRIANS;
- (2) A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE;
- (3) A POLITICAL CABINET.

6. BASHIR SAID DECENTRALIZATION WAS TOO LATE BECAUSE THE SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS CONTROLLED MUCH OF THE COUNTRY. HE SPECIFIED THAT SYRIAN FORCES REMAINED IN THE BATROUN AND CEDARS AREAS AND HAD INDEED REINFORCED THEIR POSITIONS THERE. HE SAID THE SYRIANS CONTROLLED ALL THE MOUNTAIN AREAS NORTH OF BYBLOS DISTRICT. HE ESTIMATED THERE WERE NOW A TOTAL OF 40,000 SYRIAN SOLDIERS IN LEBANON.

7. BASHIR SAID THAT THE GENERAL STRIKE CALLED FOR SEPTEMBER 13 WOULD BE PEACEFUL. HE SAID THE STRIKE WOULD BE OBSERVED IN EAST BEIRUT, THE METN AND KISRWAN, BUT NO OTHER AREAS.

8. BEGIN COMMENT: BASHIR HAS THREATENED ACTION AGAINST THE SYRIANS AND PRESIDENT SARKIS BEFORE. WE DO BELIEVE THERE IS AN INCREASING FEELING OF DESPERA-

TION ON THE PART OF THE CHRISTIANS, HOWEVER, AND
CANNOT RULE OUT VIOLENT INITIATIVES ON THE PART OF
THEIR MILITIAS. END COMMENT.
PARKER

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NNN

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